

415 products to be dried are not exposed to heavy smoke, but to a
251 small fire of very dry wood producing a low, hot flame, or, if possible, to the heat given off by a glowing bed of charcoal.

When completely prepared, protected, and wrapped in leaves, the chikwangu are laid above the kenge for six to eight hours, while the housewife maintains a charcoal fire underneath. When dried and smoked in this way, the chikwangu keep a very long time.

Lacking a kenge, a woman sometimes uses a pottery vessel with a flat bottom, pierced with small holes, and vertical sides.

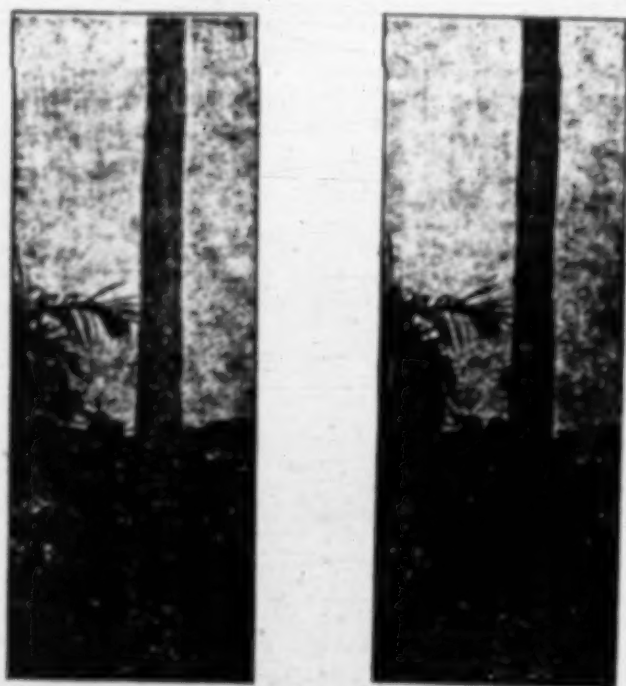


Fig. 77. Two Ways of Climbing Trees.

This fits on top of an old chikwangu pot, mpoko-kepinga, whose bottom has been broken.

The mpoko-kepinga is placed over the fire. The woman seals the juncture between the mpoko-kepinga and the kenge with the pierced bottom, using a paste of clay and potter's earth.

We did not find this particular kind of pottery beyond the Batete area. The Ipanga-Yaelima, as well as the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu, do not seem to be aware of its existence and, in any case, do not use it. [136] 415

I come now to the important subject of palm oil. We have already noted how frequently the native housewife uses it in preparing meals. This oil takes the place of the butter and fats used in European cooking. Gathering the clusters of palm nuts and making the oil are very important among all the tribes. 262 249

The remarks of Mr. Engels on this subject in his work on the Wangata [Ngata] are applicable to all the peoples we visited.

In each village one or several natives chosen from the nimblest and most daring (the local daredevils) specialize in gathering the clusters from the palm trees. They do this not only for themselves, but also for others for a slight fee. 249 464

Gathering these clusters is always somewhat dangerous. The native must climb to the top of palm trees which are sometimes 249 481



Fig. 78. Mortar and Pestle for Preparing Vegetables and Palm Oil.

20 to 25 meters high and, once there, must work hard to disentangle and sever the cluster.

The method of climbing varies according to the height of the palm trees. We noted two different procedures among all the tribes visited (see Fig. 77). [137]

If the palm tree is not high, the native climbs to the cluster by using the stubs of cut stems as steps. If the tree is very high, the native uses a rattan belt which encircles both man and tree trunk.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch a native climb up to the crown of a palm tree. He does it with truly extraordinary

249 skill and speed. Supported by his belt, with his feet propped
 481 against the tree trunk, he proceeds quickly by small bounds, moving the belt constantly upward. Upon reaching the root of the cluster, he stands erect or sits on one of the leaves, and with a hatchet or knife he frees the cluster, cuts it, and lets it fall to the foot of the tree. The women collect the nuts, pull off those still attached to the cluster, clean them very carefully, and carry them to the village.

252 According to whether the housewife wants to make a small or large amount of palm oil, she proceeds in one of two ways.

In the first case, she throws a few palm nuts into an earthenware vessel half full of water and puts them on the fire to boil for a good hour. When the outer part is soft, she pours off the water and puts the nuts in a small wooden mortar in order to separate

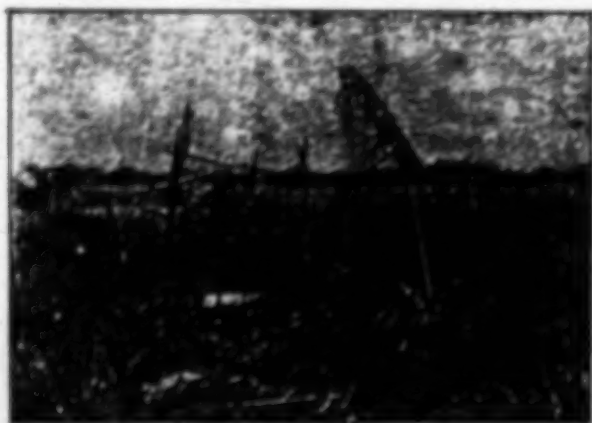


Fig. 79. Installation for Making Palm Oil.

the pulp from the kernels. For this purpose, she avails herself of the mortar and wooden pestle used in preparing vegetables. When the outer part is completely separated from the nut, the woman takes it and extracts the juice by squeezing it tightly in her hands. The kernels are discarded.

In the second case, each village has a special installation for making palm oil. This very primitive factory usually stands slightly apart from the dwellings. Everyone has access to it, and it belongs to the entire community, but each family uses it individually.

000 point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

273 In addition to water which is the customary drink of all the tribes, we found the following beverages according to region: palm wine, malafu; sugarcane beer, masanga; and pombe, maize beer.



Fig. 84. Calabash for Palm Oil, also for Water.

Palm wine, the native malafu, although liked, is usually not very much in demand, especially when the native can replace it with masanga, sugar-cane beer. We found it among all the peoples, however, although actually only the Ipanga-Yaelima and the Basongo Meno-Bankutu drink it regularly.

[439] In the other regions palm wine is made particularly in the villages near government posts or commercial establishments for the benefit of the Whites. These villages usually have a professional vintager.

The vintage comes from tapping the trees. The mese palm, raffia, and the oil palm are chiefly used.

273
• 481 The native has three methods of climbing the trees for the vintage. The first is the one we described for gathering clusters

of the palm nuts; the second one consists of leaning a pole-ladder ²⁷³ against the palm or fastening rungs to the trunk itself; the third ⁴⁸¹ is to dig holes in the trunk to serve as steps. The native climbs to the crown and cuts a palm leaf just below the terminal bud. He digs a rather deep opening in the wound and plants a palm leaflet in it to serve as a channeling trough. At the other end of this trough, the native fastens a calabash. The palm sap fills the hole and flows slowly [147] down the trough into the calabash. The native comes to collect it early in the morning.

When fresh, this wine seemed delicious to me; fermented, ²⁷³ I found it undrinkable!

The natives, on the other hand, went only after it has fermented for three or four days.

Another method, simpler but less profitable, is to cut down the palm tree, lop off the crown, and gather the sap that flows out. Used in this way, a palm tree may yield, at most, 10 to



Fig. 85. Masanga Brewery, Basakata.

15 liters of wine and is permanently destroyed. The wine, moreover, is of a decidedly inferior quality. A native would never dare offer it to the head of a post.

Sugar-cane beer, the native masanga, is the drink most in demand.

In certain regions, notably among the Basakata-Baless, we found one or two large establishments for making beer in each village. These breweries are located a little outside the village. The equipment is very rudimentary. It consists of a large, cleared space with the ground well beaten, a straw roof sheltering

THE NKUMU OF THE TUMBA

624 customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the
576 salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then
given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *ekopo*
coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his
back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than
the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those
who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one
624 specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu*
has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them.
[556] For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights
to another more fortunate member of the *ekopo*. Homage having been paid, word is
sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat
[302] of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates
are attached to his *montolo*, and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside
dances, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside,
[533] the *lekombi* begins to play, the *nyemba* to sing, and the Batwa *ntotii* to praise the
nkumu by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *Nsomo*, *Bilepo*, and the
maomi, the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen round
the *ipana* is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and
the crowd disperses.

When *Nkema Akuka* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to
[481] become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-
legged waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even
his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the
various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over,
the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by
the *nkumu*.

624 At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *ekopo* and the *molembu*
negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his
596 line, he and his *ekopo* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take
over the land originally accorded. The *molembu* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they
621 designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *molembu*
and *ekopo* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must
be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in
marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *ekopo* could be sent off to their
home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers
the *ekopo* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted
they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights,
and sent off home.

224 Among the reciprocal obligations of *molembu* and *ekopo* are included the sharing
624 of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and
elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other
621 animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given,
if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited
596 strictly to the *ekopo* and *molembu*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the
nkumu with meat to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

THE NKUMU OF THE TUMBA

624 An *nkumu* can never walk alone, but must always be accompanied by others, and
 (48) on no occasion whatsoever may he run. Even though he never washes, if he is out
 (513) in the rain and sees everybody else hurrying for shelter, he will not quicken his pace.
 His movements must be slow and deliberate. The *nkumu* never sleeps alone; waking
 (514) and sleeping he is attended by someone. But apart from this he is free to go where he
 (554) wishes. The *nkumu* is not indiscriminate, as others may be, in his private habits, but
 must use his own latrine at all times, and if travelling must have his own latrine in
 each place where he stays. The inland *nkumu* frequently take advantage of this custom
 by hiding their accumulated brass rods at the bottom of a freshly dug latrine. Such
 hidden wealth will be acquired by an inheritor at the decease of the *nkumu*.

In speaking of himself the *nkumu* never refers to himself by his title but always
 by his own name.

624 The couch upon which the *nkumu* sits or reclines during the daytime may not be
 352 shared indiscriminately with others, but those permitted to sit upon it at the same
 (562) time as the *nkumu* are *maomi*, women, and Batwa. The reservation of this couch for
 (563) the use of the *nkumu* is not surprising, but the exceptions are. One explanation given
 was that women and Batwa are not *bato ba zee*, persons in particular; they do not
 count for anything in the social life of the community; they are not really 'people'.
 (672) Another explanation was that they do not pay fines, this being tantamount to saying
 that they are exempt from laws and therefore cannot break laws even by doing what
 would be for others an illegal act. The stool of the *nkumu*, however, has closer
 restrictions in the manner of its use. Besides the *nkumu* only two others may sit upon
 it, *Nsomo* and *Mperge*. It is always carried by one of his wives, though not necessarily
 by any special one.

624 The restrictions concerning the food of the *nkumu* are many. He may eat food
 262 only in his own house, or, if on a journey, in one given over for his use. He may not
 enter another house to partake of food even if invited to do so. Likewise the *nkumu*
 may not eat in the forest, or eat or drink anywhere along the road when on a journey,
 but must wait until he arrives at a village and has a house at his disposal in order to
 partake of food and drink. He never 'sleeps with hunger'; even if a wife or child
 should die causing him great sorrow he must partake of food before going to sleep.

(765) The Bonginda *nkumu* must never go into mourning, and death must be ignored by
 them, but the inland *nkumu* are permitted to mourn. All food carried to an *nkumu*
 must be covered, this rule even applying to water. Food must not be placed in a
 basket with high sides (*eboko*), but in a shallow one (*moyala*), and no food that has
 been kept overnight in a pot may be eaten by him: swelling of the abdomen will
 result. Various foods are taboo, among these all fast-moving snakes, though slow-
 (824) moving ones may be eaten; light-coloured palm-nuts may not be eaten, and a variety
 of yam known as *menkiki* is shunned, for it is with the tough stems of the *menkiki*
 that the dying body of the *nkumu* will be bound to ensure the sitting posture necessary
 for burial.

624 Among regulations roughly classed as social, we have already covered several in
 (43) references above, and have referred to the *nkumu* in council. It may be added here that
 (68) he is expected to agree with the majority of the councillors and not fall out with them.
 The rules affecting the *nongo* of the *nkumu* are accompanied by severe penalties. There
 must not be any fighting; if anger is aroused to the point of blows the antagonists